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ABSTRACT

This guide provides a map that schools can follow when implementing the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) program. It is hoped that CSRD will help schools foster higher standards and ensure that schools help students meet these standards. The booklet describes the goals and benchmarks that must be established for student performance, including goals for model implementation. It outlines the need for staff members who support the project and offers suggestions on how to gain their support. It discusses the research-based methods that inform CSR and lists some of the problems that arise when a model is not carefully investigated before being chosen. The text portrays the need for external assistance when incorporating a CSR plan and gives some of the "best practices" that draw on such assistance. It discusses the importance of parental and community involvement and draws a connection between higher achievement and involvement. Also important to the process is staff development, such as giving new teachers a mentor; the coordination of resources when implementing the plan; and evaluating the project once it is under way. Finally, success can be tied to how well a school creates a coherent, high-quality learning environment by coordinating school and classroom management, curriculum, instruction, assessment, professional development, technology, and parental involvement. (RJM)

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Unlocking the 9 Components of CSRD

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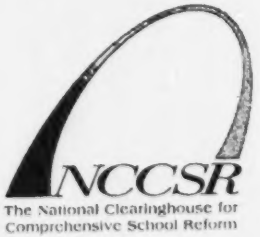
Unlocking the 9 Components of CSRD

Written by Lisa Hansel
Designed by Jody Biggers



From January to September 2000, NCCSR devoted its monthly email newsletter, NCCSR Bookmark, to providing information on the essential components of comprehensive school reform (CSR). This guide is a compilation of those newsletters and an update on new resources for implementing the nine components.

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past ten years, the standards and accountability movement has become a major force for school improvement. As states have adopted content standards and developed tests to measure students' mastery of those standards, schools and districts have had to write new curricula, assist teachers in creating new lessons and revise their schedules to accommodate extensive student testing. While implementing these changes some educators have decided that, if students are to have a real opportunity to meet these standards, their schools will need to completely rethink their educational and management practices. Comprehensive school reform (CSR) has emerged as a way to both implement standards and ensure that everything happening in the school is designed to help students meet the standards.

More than yet another program, CSR is

- A systematic approach to school-wide improvement that incorporates every aspect of a school — from curriculum and instruction to school management.

- A program and a process that is designed to enable all students to meet challenging academic content and performance goals.

- A framework for using research to move from multiple, fragmented educational programs to a unified plan with a single focus — academic achievement.

- A product of the long-term, collaborative efforts of school staff, parents and district staff.

In 1997, Congress and the U.S. Department of Education recognized the potential of CSR to improve education and created the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) program. CSRD provides grants to schools of a minimum of $50,000 per year for three years for the implementation of schoolwide improvement plans. In the legislation (Public Law 105-78), Congress established the following nine components that schools applying for CSRD funds must use as the core of their reform plans:

1) **Goals**: have measurable goals for student performance and benchmarks for meeting those goals.

2) **Supportive staff members**: ensure that programs are selected and supported by school faculty, administrators and staff before implementation.

3) **Research-based methods**: employ strategies that are based on reliable research and effective practices and have increased student achievement in schools with diverse characteristics.

4) **External assistance**: use high-quality external technical support from a CSR entity with experience or expertise in school-wide reform and improvement.

5) **Parental and community involvement**: provide for the meaningful involvement of parents and the local community in planning and implementing school improvement activities.

6) **Staff development**: provide high-quality and continuous teacher and staff professional development and training

7) **Coordination of resources**: identify how all resources available to the school will be used to coordinate services to support and sustain the school reform effort.

8) **Evaluation**: include a plan for evaluating the implementation of the school-wide reform and its impact on students' academic achievement.

9) **Comprehensive approach**: have a comprehensive design for effective school functioning that includes instruction, assessment, classroom management, professional development, parental involvement, and school management, and that aligns the school's curriculum, technology and professional development into a school-wide reform plan.

Many educators have argued that there should be two more components, curriculum/instruction and governance. However, whether CSR is approached with nine, eleven, or some other set of components, the success of CSR depends not on any one of these components, but on their alignment and interaction in a comprehensive plan. In the sections that follow, each of the nine components is discussed and resources are provided. Although schools can consider the components in any order, this guide suggests a logical progression for schoolwide improvement planning — beginning with establishing shared goals, taking time to gather and align various resources and ending the process by reviewing the plan to ensure that it is coherent, goal-oriented and comprehensive.

1. GOALS AND BENCHMARKS FOR STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Successfully implementing comprehensive school reform (CSR) relies on establishing clear, measurable goals and benchmarks for achieving those goals. The CSRD legislation specifies that schools awarded CSRD grants must have goals for student performance. As explained by Hugh Burkett from the U.S. Department of Education's CSRD office, "A CSR program should have measurable goals for student performance tied to state content and performance standards. In addition, a CSR program should have ways to benchmark student progress toward achievement of those standards."

The challenge of aligning reform goals for student performance with state content and performance standards is being met with mixed results. In 1995 RAND conducted interviews about accountability systems with principals whose schools were implementing New American Schools' designs. On the positive side, they found that "85 percent of the respondents in jurisdictions with performance-based accountability tests talked about the close alignment between reform goals and state's assessments." Principals thought using authentic assessments helped reform-oriented teachers internalize standards and adjust to performance testing.

However, many principals "said their teachers 'stepped out of the design' to prepare students for mandated tests by reviewing skills and content likely to be on the test, practicing test taking skills, and working with practice tests and test preparation materials." RAND's report, *Reforming and Conforming: NASDC Principals Discuss School Accountability Systems*, is available at http://www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR716/index.html.

Goals and Benchmarks for Model Implementation

In addition to goals and benchmarks for student achievement, schools should consider laying out goals and benchmarks for model implementation. Although the ultimate goal of CSR models is to increase student achievement, progress with student achievement and progress with implementing a model are not one and the same.

While most model developers specify goals that address the central focus of their designs, many are now laying out benchmarks to help schools meet those goals. Benchmarks help schools keep model implementation on track by clearly defining intermediate objectives and actions. As several model developers explained at a meeting hosted by the U.S. Department of Education in November 1999, benchmarks are what the model is about. They can be written with stages such that schools know whether each component of the model is being implemented minimally, adequately or, as one developer

put it, "with style." Benchmarks set short-term objectives to make the model easier to understand and implementation less overwhelming. They also provide frequent opportunities for the staff to have a sense of accomplishment and early warning when there is a need for readjustment. Tracking school progress against benchmarks contributes to staff buy-in and helps keep motivation high.

While visiting schools with CSRD grants to prepare *CSRD in the Field: Final Update* (http://www.goodschools.gwu.edu/SBS/ICSR.html), the U.S. Department of Education sensed the complexity of setting some goals and benchmarks for student performance according to states' standards and others for model implementation according to developers' standards. The Department of Education reported that "States, districts and technical assistance providers should consider whether schools need further assistance in developing benchmarks for measuring progress in implementing reform efforts and improvements in student achievement." The report points out that well designed benchmarks for model implementation and student achievement can guide a school through the change process by specifying expectations and facilitating the measurement of progress.

The Department also reported on schools that had been quite innovative and effective in combining their goals and benchmarks for student achievement and model implementation:

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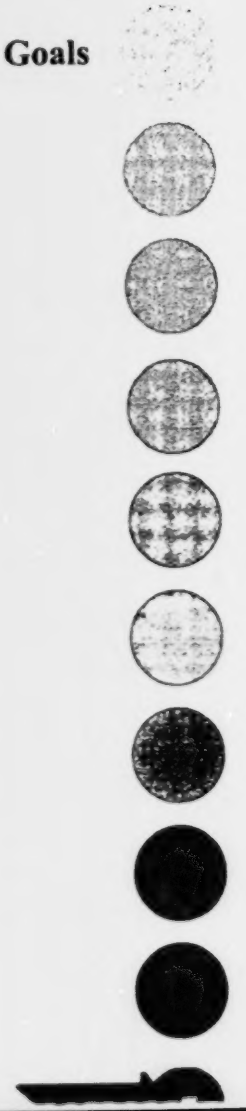

"One school we visited has developed a regular progress plan which helps staff stay on track, and shows faculty how things are going. This regular return to the school's goals, expectations, and progress is helping to build and reinforce commitment to the reform effort. Another site has developed an observation tool for principals and teachers to use to see if real change is taking place in classroom practice in order to ensure that reform is not just an add-on but a replacement of old practices. The tool includes teacher questionnaires regarding the degree of implementation and classroom observation of changes in instructional approaches."

Resources

- Setting measurable goals and benchmarks is an integral part of the comprehensive school reform planning process. NCCSR has gathered the best resources for goal setting in the "Planning and Assessing" section of CSR Step by Step. http://www.goodschools.gwu.edu/SBS/PaA.html

- The *Reference Guide to Continuous Improvement Planning* has a section titled "Strategic Decision-making" that addresses goals and performance indicators (measurable benchmarks). http://www.ode.state.oh.us/si/CIP_RefGuide.pdf

- The short chapter on goals in *Fitting the Pieces: Studies of Education Reform* by the U.S. Department of Education discusses the process of setting goals and provides several vignettes to describe the process at individual schools.
  http://www.ed.gov/pubs/SER/FTP/lesson2.html

II. SUPPORTIVE STAFF MEMBERS

Supportive Staff

In the definition provided in the introduction, CSR is described as a product of the long-term, collaborative efforts of school staff, parents and district staff. Individuals —teachers, counselors, administrators, parents and other school and district staff members — accomplish CSR by working together. Because of CSR's reliance on motivation and collaboration, its implementation and success are directly related to the amount of support it has among parents, school faculty and staff, and district staff.

Gaining support for CSR should be a matter of demonstrating that CSR can help increase academic achievement and engaging staff in an improvement planning process that gives them ownership over their school's comprehensive reform. *How to Build Support for Comprehensive School Reform* (http://www.naschools.org/respub/support.pdf), a New American Schools (NAS) publication, emphasizes the necessity of creating a sense of urgency among school and community stakeholders and encouraging them to agree on the need for improvement. NAS suggests establishing a district leadership team that presents data such as test scores, attendance and graduation rates to school staff and community members to make a case for engaging in CSR. Data continue to be used throughout the CSR process to gauge progress, identify successes during implementation and isolate issues

that require extra attention. NAS also emphasizes the importance of engaging stakeholders in significant ways. "As a condition of their support for change, parents, teachers, and community leaders want to be consulted about issues such as standards, assessments, professional development, and school safety. They want direct access to information. And they want a say in important decisions affecting their children, students, and community" (p. 14).

Having implemented CSR in hundreds of schools, the developers of most nationally available models recognize the importance of supportive staff members and have developed procedures to ensure that they only work in schools where the reform effort is voluntarily chosen by the faculty and administration. For example, Success For All requires that at least 80 percent of teachers vote in favor of the program in a secret ballot. Similarly, the Accelerated Schools web site states, "While a unanimous vote/consensus is optimal, a school will not be accepted without at least 90 percent of full-time staff and school community representatives willing to transform their school into an accelerated school."

Yet making a free choice is only part of the answer when it comes to maintaining support for several years. School staff must also make an informed choice. Common strategies by model developers to ensure that schools are making a choice they will continue to support

Supportive Staff

include encouraging teachers to make site visits, read program materials and watch videotapes of the program in action.

Key Concerns

In almost all schools that consider CSR, or any other significant change, there is some resistance. This can have many underlying causes — from a feeling that this is just one of many reform ideas that will come and go to a belief that the wrong model has been selected. In a case study of the Clover Park School District's experience with CSR, principals attempted to overcome the resistance by inviting, but not forcing, critics to be more involved with the process, allowing time and peer pressure to bring resistant staff around and even allowing highly resistant staff to transfer. The full report, *Implementing School Reform Models: The Clover Park Experience* is available at http://www.nwrel.org/csrdp/clover.html.

Supportive Staff

While gaining support for CSR among parents, teachers, administrators and other staff is crucial to launch CSR, maintaining support during implementation — possibly several years — is equally important for increasing student achievement. A study of CSRD in six Midwest states found that "if faculty support for CSRD drops, so too will their willingness to devote time to the project." The study recommends making sure there is a good fit between the CSR initiative and the school's, district's and state's existing reform goals. An

overview of the study is available at http://www.ncrel.org/csri/respub/launch.htm.

Best Practices

All of the following means of fostering support among school staff were highlighted by the CSRD office in the U.S. Department of Education in *CSRD in the Field: Final Update* (http://www.goodschools.gwu.edu/SBS/ICSR.html).

- Teachers, particularly skeptical ones, making site visits to CSRD schools.
- A summer institute by a model developer for school faculty funded by the district.
- After a model has been selected, teachers doing site visits to schools implementing the same model for professional development such as lesson demonstrations.
- A respected, veteran teacher being trained as a model facilitator.

Resources

- The Tennessee Department of Education and AEL developed a rubric for the nine CSRD components that

Supportive Staff

includes indicators for each component and a scale of rigor for determining the extent to which each component has been implemented.
http://www.ael.org/rel/csr/tnrubric.pdf

- *Comprehensive School Redesign: A Roadmap to Resources* is a web site by AFT that contains a section called "Build Support for Change Based on Adoption of Research-Based Programs and Practices" with direct links to resources written by model developers, education researchers, AFT staff and New American Schools.
http://www.aft.org/edissues/rsa/guide/Roadmap.htm [After clicking on the link above, scroll down for the section on support.]

Question From The Field: "Our elementary school has been involved in what is considered in some circles as a highly effective educational reform implementation. As the external facilitator component has been faded out during our seventh year, I see a little deterioration of the integrity of some of the instructional delivery intensity that was so important during the project. The roadblock to sustaining this effectiveness appears to me to be our lack of institutionalization of the basic underpinnings of the philosophy of the project. How do we see this coming and what do we do about it?"

This is a great question with no easy answers — it highlights the depth of support that is necessary for a change to not only be implemented, but to become institutionalized as part of the staff's guiding philosophy. NCCSR recommends the following resources:

- *Profiles of Successful Schoolwide Programs, Volume 2* describes several aspects of implementation. Each school vignette contains a section on sustaining change. http://www.ed.gov/pubs/idea_profiles/intro.html

- *The Role of Leadership in Sustaining School Reform: Voices From the Field - July 1996* has a chapter on "Dimensions of Sustaining Leadership" that may be particularly useful. http://www.ed.gov/pubs/Leadership/index.html

Supportive Staff

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III. RESEARCH-BASED METHODS

The CSRD legislation states that schools are to "employ innovative strategies and proven methods for student learning, teaching, and school management that are based on reliable research and effective practices, and have been replicated successfully in schools with diverse characteristics" (Public Law 105-78).

Research-Based Methods

The CSRD office in the U.S. Department of Education has addressed the interpretation of "research-based methods" by developing a Continuum of Evidence of Effectiveness. Ideally, a method, model or strategy would

- Have a solid theoretical foundation.
- Be possible to implement and replicate in various schools.
- Have been demonstrated effective in increasing academic achievement by a rigorous evaluation.

In reality, the research base of most methods is not yet this extensive. The Department's Continuum helps schools and districts assess the research base and evidence of effectiveness of models and strategies. The Continuum lays out the following four dimensions of what "research-based methods" entail: theoretical foundation, demonstrated capacity to increase student achievement, evidence of the feasibility of implementation and evidence of replicability. Found

in Appendix B of the Guidance on the CSRD Program, the Continuum provides a useful set of questions and examples for considering a method's research base. These questions provide a framework for discerning marginal, somewhat rigorous and rigorous evidence for each of the four dimensions. The Guidance can be found at http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/compreform/csrdgui.html.

Key Concerns

Preliminary research indicates that some schools may select models without examining a variety of options and considering their research foundations. The Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed At-Risk (a joint venture of Johns Hopkins University and Howard University) released a study called *How Schools Choose Externally Developed Reform Designs* (http://www.csos.jhu.edu/crespar/Reports/report35entire.htm). Although the study is limited to six schools in Memphis, it indicates that schools are only gathering a moderate amount of information about models. The major findings are that

- Evidence of effectiveness does not appear to be a major consideration.
- During early implementation, more progress was being made in schools where educators' choices of models were more fully informed.

The American Institutes for Research (AIR) conducted an in-depth study of 24 comprehensive school reform models, including the 17 mentioned in the CSRD legislation. They found that three models — Direct Instruction, High Schools That Work and Success For All — had strong evidence of increasing students' academic achievement. In addition, seven other models had promising evidence of increasing achievement. The full report, *An Educator's Guide to Schoolwide Reform*, is available on NCCSR's web site under CSR Step by Step, Examining CSR Models at http://www.goodschools.gwu.edu/SBS/ECSRM.html.

Question from the Field: "What questions should I ask before selecting a CSR model?"

Selecting a CSR model is a difficult process of determining your school's needs, examining the broad array of models available and finding a model that can build on your school's strengths while addressing its weaknesses. New American Schools, a non-profit organization that works with several CSR design teams (model developers), developed a set of guidelines to help schools determine the quality of CSR designs. These guidelines lay out the criteria for high quality, comprehensive designs as follows. A design should:

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1) Demonstrate success in helping schools raise the academic achievement of all students.
2) Demonstrate success in helping schools reach their organizational goals.
3) Be a research-proven, comprehensive plan for school reform that encompasses an entire school and helps all students reach high standards.
4) Demonstrate how its services and deliverables enable the plan to be successfully implemented.
5) Provide quality professional development, technical assistance and materials.
6) Demonstrate an ongoing process for evaluating implementation, staff and parent satisfaction, and student achievement.
7) Link schools implementing the design and engage parents and communities in a shared vision to help all students reach high standards.
8) Demonstrate financial viability.
9) Demonstrate a capacity to deliver high quality services to all schools in which it is being implemented.

More information on these guidelines is available on New American Schools' web site at http://www.naschools.org/teams/select_guidelines.phtml.

Research-Based Methods

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Questions to ask before selecting a model are also provided in *Making Good Choices* (http://www.goodschools.gwu.edu/SBS/MMSN.html), developed by the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory. This tool for planning and implementing CSR helps schools select a CSR model that fits school needs.

Resources

In addition to the AIR report described above, information on the evidence of effectiveness of CSR models can be found in the following:

- The *Catalog of School Reform Models* by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory has descriptions of over 60 models. Evidence of effectiveness is in the "Results" section of each description. http://www.goodschools.gwu.edu/SBS/ECSRM.html

- *Tools for Schools: School Reform Models Supported by the National Institute on the Education of At-Risk Students* by the U.S. Department of Education presents information on 27 models for schools with significant populations of at-risk students. While most of the models

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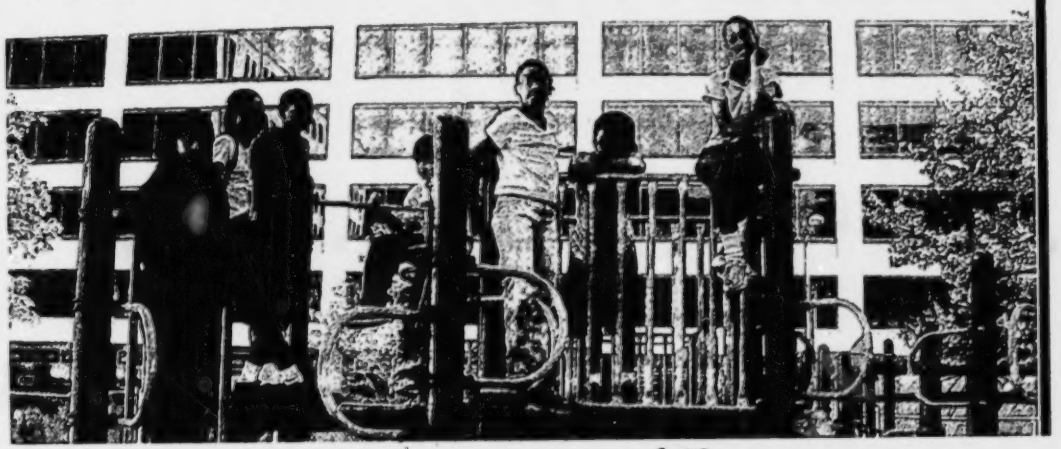
described are comprehensive school reform models, there are some curriculum classroom and professional development models as well.
http://www.ed.gov/pubs/ToolsforSchools/

- *Better by Design? A Consumer's Guide to Schoolwide Reform* by The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation describes ten well-known reform models and presents accounts of site visits to schools where the models are being implemented.
http://www.goodschools.gwu.edu/SBS/ECSRM.html

- *What Do We Know: Widely Implemented School Improvement Programs* developed by the Laboratory for Student Success describes and compares twelve reform programs that have been implemented for a minimum of five years in at least 50 schools or with at least 3,000 students.
http://www.goodschools.gwu.edu/SBS/ORECSRM.html



IV. EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE

In regard to CSR, external assistance is meant to provide expertise in schoolwide improvement. Specifically, the assistance provider should help the school implement effective, research-based strategies. While expertise is often available within schools and districts, technical assistance by external providers — such as a regional educational laboratories, comprehensive assistance centers, model developers or universities — broadens the pool of knowledge from which schools can draw. *Research-Based Strategies to Achieve High Standards: A Guidebook on School-wide Improvement* by WestEd (http://www.wested.org/csrd/guidebook/toc.htm) explains the importance of external assistance as follows:

External Assistance

> "The incorporation of external support and assistance into CSRD recognizes that school-wide reform is an extremely difficult, challenging, and lengthy undertaking. There are no magic formulas to turn around low-achieving schools, and success comes only after years of careful planning and effort. Providers of external technical support and assistance are highly skilled in assisting schools as they grapple with the challenges of comprehensive reform. No matter how committed and idealistic they are, school administrators and staff should not be expected to carry out comprehensive school-wide programs on their own."

Preliminary research shows that schools tend to agree that external assistance is important. In its first year evaluation of CSRD, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction found that school staff said the external assistance provided by the models, such as detailed written feedback, was a "key resource" (http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dlsea/sit/iasa.html). External assistance from people with experience implementing CSR allows the exchange of lessons learned from other sites and enables the school to save precious resources. Some external providers also create networks of schools with similar needs and goals.

Best Practices

In selecting an external assistance provider schools know their ultimate goal, improvement through CSR, but they may not know exactly what to look for in comparing different sources of assistance. A recent study of New American Schools models by RAND highlights key features of external assistance that schools should look for to achieve greater implementation. RAND conducted an evaluation of seven CSR models in 40 schools. Schools were rated on their level of implementation after two years as not implementing, planning, piloting, implementing or fulfilling their vision. "Higher levels of implementation were associated with design teams that

- Had a stable team with the capacity to field qualified personnel to serve growing numbers of schools

- Effectively communicated their designs to schools and avoided school staff confusion
- Effectively marketed to districts and gained the resource support required for the design
- Emphasized the core elements of schooling common across the designs: curriculum, instruction, student assignment, assessments, and professional development
- Supported implementation with whole-school training, facilitators, extensive training days, quality checks, and materials." (p. 76)

The full report, *Lessons from New American Schools' Scale-Up Phase: Prospects for Bringing Designs to Multiple Schools* by Susan J. Bodilly, contains discussions of each of these findings. Look for the report at http://www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR942/MR942.pdf/.

External Assistance

AEL, a regional educational laboratory, has designed a two-year, multi-phase Academy for External Facilitators as part of its effort to support comprehensive school reform. The Academy provides the content and skill-specific strategies necessary for states to develop frameworks for their work with low-performing schools. External facilitation, a new direction in external technical assistance, promises to help schools in their comprehensive school reform efforts and to sustain continuous improvement. The external facilitator provides support to schools embracing change, cohesiveness between existing

programs and new reform initiatives, and processes to address challenges and solve problems. The external facilitator's ultimate goal is to enable a school to establish an internal, on-going facilitation process for making prudent, data-based decisions that help students become successful learners. The Academy for External Facilitators is another avenue by which AEL ensures that states receive the highest quality assistance in making comprehensive school reform successful. For more information, contact Billie A. Hauser, AEL's Director of School Reform at 1-800-624-9120.

Question from the Field: "Where can I find the list of approved models?"

Many people have sent messages to AskNCCSR requesting "the list of approved models." No agency or organization has created a list of approved models. The U.S. Department of Education does not have a list of approved or recommended models. The legislation authorizing CSRD listed models as examples of school-wide reform designs. While the CSRD legislation encourages schools to examine successful externally developed models, it also allows for locally developed models that are based on research and proven practice.

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In practice, the comprehensive reform programs being implemented by schools receiving CSRD funding represent a wide range of externally and locally developed models. The Southwest Education Development Laboratory maintains a database of CSRD schools with this information, which can be found at http://www.sedl.org/csrd/awards.html.

Descriptions of more than sixty models can be found in the Examining CSR Models section of NCCSR's Step by Step web site at http://www.goodschools.gwu.edu/SBS/ECSRM.html.

Resources

- For more information on external assistance, including what kinds of assistance meet the CSRD funding requirement, see the U.S. Department of Education's Guidance on the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program. Sections F-5, H-1, H-3 and H-4 are particularly helpful. http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/compreform/csrdgui.html

- *The Guide to Working with Model Providers* has been produced by the Regional Educational Laboratories to

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assist schools and districts in making the most of these partnerships. It includes information on negotiating a contract, through implementation and evaluation, to the end of the contract. Tools are included that can help to clarify services and costs, identify gaps between school needs and the model, define the district role in implementation, and conduct evaluations.
http://www.goodschools.gwu.edu/SBS/WMD.html

In addition to model providers, the following organizations provide external technical support and assistance for CSR schools:

- Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs) — The RELs are 10 technical assistance, research and development, and information dissemination organizations funded by the U.S. Department of Education. Each has both a specific geographic region to serve and a specialty on which it offers national leadership. All of the RELs have information on CSR.
http://www.relnetwork.org/

- Comprehensive Assistance Centers (CCs) — The U.S. Department of Education has funded 15 regional CCs to work with recipients of funds under the Improving America's Schools Act such as states, local education agencies, tribes and schools. Among others, priority for

services is given to schools implementing school-wide programs.
http://www.wested.org/cc/html/ccnetwork.htm

External Assistance

V. PARENTAL AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Over the past few decades educational research has found that parental involvement is related to student achievement, overall school performance, student behavior, graduation rates and enrollment in higher education. Community involvement is important because it opens the door to a wide variety of services for children as well as a large supply of volunteers.

Standards

The National Parent Teacher Association provides the following six standards for parental involvement in schools. These standards are based on the work of Dr. Joyce Epstein at the Johns Hopkins University (contact information is provided in the resources section below). More information on these standards such as quality indicators from successful programs is on their web site at http://www.pta.org/programs/invstand.htm.

1) Communication: Communication between home and school is regular, two-way, and meaningful.
2) Parenting: Parenting skills are promoted and supported.
3) Student Learning: Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning.
4) Volunteering: Parents are welcome in the school, and their support and assistance are sought.

5) School Decision Making and Advocacy: Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families.
6) Collaborating with Community: Community resources are used to strengthen schools, families, and student learning.

Question from the Field: "How can a school achieve high levels of parental and community involvement?"

The following *Keys to Success* were compiled and written by the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE). They are based on information from actual school programs.

- "Assess family's needs and interests about ways of working with the schools;
- Set clear and measurable objectives based on parent and community input, to help foster a sense of cooperation and communication between families, communities, and schools;
- Hire and train a parent/family liaison to directly contact parents and coordinate family activities. The liaison should be bilingual as needed and sensitive to the needs of family and the community, including the non-English speaking community;
- Develop multiple outreach mechanisms to inform families, businesses, and the community about family involvement policies and programs through newsletters, slide shows, videotapes, and local newspapers;
- Recognize the importance of a community's historic,

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ethnic, linguistic, or cultural resources in generating interest in family involvement;

- Use creative forms of communication between educators and families that are personal, goal oriented, and make optimal use of new communication technologies;
- Mobilize parents/families as volunteers in the school assisting with instructional tasks, meal service, and administrative office functions. Family members might also act as invited classroom speakers and volunteer tutors;
- Provide staff development for teachers and administrators to enable them to work effectively with families and with each other as partners in the educational process;
- Ensure access to information about nutrition, healthcare, services for individuals with disabilities, and support provided by schools or community agencies;
- Schedule programs and activities flexibly to reach diverse family groups;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of family involvement programs and activities on a regular basis."

NCPIE is dedicated to developing relationships between schools and families. The coalition's members include the major education associations and advocacy groups in this country. This makes them a great resource for a broad range of publications, training and other services that are available to promote community involvement, family education, family support, and school and family partnerships. For

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more information, including guidelines on creating a school policy for parental involvement, visit their web site at http://www.ncpie.org.

Resources

- The National Network of Partnership Schools offers a no-cost program designed to slide into any comprehensive school reform approach as the parental and community involvement component. The Network's web site contains information about how to join as well as publications on research, policy, program development and evaluation. http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000

- For more information on research related to parental involvement, visit the National Parent Teacher Association's web site. http://www.pta.org/programs/pfistand.htm#Research

- *Supporting Parent, Family, and Community Involvement in Your School* is a guide by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory that provides suggestions based on family and community involvement research and can help school staff design a long-term approach to garnering the positive involvement of all concerned. http://www.nwrel.org/csrdp/family.pdf

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- To learn more about the benefits of community involvement, see the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory's web site on community involvement. http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/envrnmnt/famnco mm/pa4lk50.htm

- The North Central Regional Educational Laboratory has put together an array of resources including guides for increasing involvement and a database of parent involvement programs. http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/pa0cont.htm

- U.S. Department of Education Resources:

    - *Reaching All Families: Creating Family-Friendly Schools* http://www.ed.gov/pubs/ReachFam/index.html

    - *A New Understanding of Parent Involvement: Family-Work-School* http://www.ed.gov/pubs/PFIE/prntinlv.html

    - *Family Involvement in Children's Education Successful Local Approaches: An Idea Book* http://www.ed.gov/pubs/FamInvolve/

Involvement

- *A Compact for Learning: An Action Handbook for Family-School-Community Partnerships*
  http://www.ed.gov/pubs/Compact/

- The Partnership for Family Involvement in Education's (PFIE) web site has many useful resources including research on family involvement and a database of PFIE partners (over 4,000 schools, community organizations, businesses and religious groups across the nation).
  http://pfie.ed.gov/

VI. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

According to the National Partnership for Excellence and Accountability in Teaching's (NPEAT) research on school improvement, educating teachers is one of the most important ways to improve the quality of teaching and learning. School improvement relies on professional development because school staff members implement reforms. Investing in professional development is one of the most effective ways to change schools substantially; nothing less will ensure a qualified teacher in every classroom.

In gathering relevant research NPEAT found that educators and policymakers at the federal, state and local levels are looking for new ways to increase learning opportunities for new as well as veteran teachers. Professional development has traditionally been seen as a formalized delivery process where teachers attend classes or workshops. Though this is still prevalent and available through various sources, professional development has also been defined as the provision of collegial opportunities to learn. Many states have adopted policies in which

- New teachers have a mentor,
- The school day is re-organized to allow teachers time to work collaboratively with one another in curricular and instructional development, and

- Teachers are involved in evaluating fellow teachers to ensure that evaluations are constructive and contribute to their professional growth.

The principles below focus on the form of professional development and were developed by NPEAT. Regardless of content and goals, professional development activities that have the characteristics below are more likely to be effective than those that do not. The principles reflect a synthesis of current research and are influenced by similar propositions by the U.S. Department of Education and the National Staff Development Council, as well as other organizations concerned with professional development.

Principles

1) The content of professional development focuses on what students are to learn and how to address the different problems students may have in learning the material.
2) Professional development should be based on analyses of the differences between (a) actual student performance and (b) goals and standards for student learning.
3) Professional development should involve teachers in the identification of what they need to learn and in the development of the learning experiences in which they will be involved.

4) Professional development should be primarily school-based and built into the day-to-day work of teaching.
5) Professional development should be organized around collaborative problem solving.
6) Professional development should be continuous and ongoing, involving follow-up and support for further learning — including support from sources external to the school that can provide necessary resources and new perspectives.
7) Professional development should incorporate evaluation of multiple sources of information on (a) outcomes for students and (b) the instruction and other processes that are involved in implementing the lessons learned through professional development.
8) Professional development should provide opportunities to gain an understanding of the theory underlying the knowledge and skills being learned.
9) Professional development should be connected to a comprehensive change process focused on improving student learning.

These principles are listed on NPEAT'S web site (http://www.npeat.org/dialogue.htm) with links to their research foundations. In addition, there is a chapter on these principles in a recently released book, *Teaching as the Learning Profession*, edited by Linda Darling-Hammond and Gary Sykes (available through Jossey-Bass).

Staff Development

Key Concern

According to the CSRD Office in the U.S. Department of Education, one of the biggest challenges schools face in implementing CSR is finding time for professional development. Implementation is sometimes delayed because schools do not have a specific plan for how and when they will provide professional development. Some examples of how schools are dealing with this challenge are in the CSRD Office's report titled *CSRD in the Field: Final Update* under the section on "Allocating Time and Resources" which is available at http://www.goodschools.gwu.edu/SBS/ICSR.html.

Best Practices

Wherry Elementary School, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, serves 645 students in grades K-5. To find the best way to serve its diverse student population, 15% of whom are limited English proficient and 66% of whom qualify for free or reduced price lunch, the school created a leadership team focused on instructional improvement. To learn about their professional development activities, how they made time and their evidence of success, see http://www.ed.gov/inits/teachers/98-99/wherry.html.

Other examples of best practices in professional development can be found through the National Awards Program for Model Professional Development at http://www.ed.gov/inits/teachers/development.html. [Under the second bullet, click on the years.]

Question from the Field: "Where can I find examples of needs assessment instruments that could be used by a school district to discern its professional development needs?"

Each of the following resources provides assessment instruments and information.

- *Design for Staff Development Preference Inventory*
  Davis, William J.
  http://ericae.net/tc2/TC009563.htm

- *ASTD Trainer's Toolkit: Organizational Performance Dimensions*
  American Society for Training and Development, Alexandria, VA
  http://ericae.net/tc3/TC018259.htm

- Effective Education Series, *Indicators of Quality Schools: Instrument to Access Your School's Quality*
  Howard, Eugene and others
  http://ericae.net/tc3/TC016002.htm

- *Chicago Effective School Projects: The Needs Assessment Instrument*
  Brandon, Sylvia
  http://ericae.net/tc3/TC016332.htm

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- *Individual Development Profile*
  Personnel Decisions, Minneapolis, MN
  http://ericae.net/tc3/TC016769.htm

- *Assessment Exercises, Self Inventories, Tests and Survey Instruments*
  Princeton, NJ Training House, Inc.
  http://ericae.net/tc3/TC017392.htm

- The University of South Florida's National Resource Center for Middle Grades/High School Education has a page of program evaluation and needs assessment services.
  http://www.coedu.usf.edu/middlegrades/NeedsAsmnt.htm

Staff Development

Resources

- The National Staff Development Council's web site contains information on traditional staff development and more interactive programs such as study groups, action research and peer coaching.
  http://www.nsdc.org/

- The American Federation of Teachers' web site contains a section on teacher quality that includes information on peer assistance/peer review and professional development.
  http://www.aft.org/edissues/teacherquality/

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- *How To Rebuild a Local Professional Development Infrastructure* is a guide by New American Schools for districts to create a professional development infrastructure that supports CSR.
  http://www.naschools.org/respub/haslam.pdf

- *Professional Development: Learning From the Best* is a book of best practices based on the National Awards Program for Model Professional Development.
  http://www.ncrel.org/pd/toolkit.htm

- *Learning the Ropes: Urban Teacher Induction Programs and Practices in the United States* is a report by Recruiting New Teachers on how urban school districts are meeting the needs of first through third year teachers.
  http://www.rnt.org/

- *A Framework for Reviewing Professional Development Policies and Practices* contains a series of important questions.
  http://www.ed.gov/pubs/CPRE/t61/framwork.html

- The North Central Regional Educational Laboratory has put together a comprehensive web site on professional development.
  http://www.ncrel.org/pd/

Staff Development

- Initial teacher preparation and mid career professional development are covered by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future.
  http://www.tc.columbia.edu/~teachcomm/

- The ERIC Clearinghouse on Teaching and Teacher Education has a database with a wide range of resources.
  http://www.ericsp.org/

- The U.S. Department of Education's web site on professional development also contains a variety of resources including an award opportunity for model programs.
  http://www.ed.gov/teacherquality/development.html

VII. COORDINATION OF RESOURCES

In planning and implementing CSR, staff members' primary focus is on increasing student achievement; but the key to effectively implementing and sustaining CSR is properly allocating resources. Just as an effective educational program coordinates curriculum, instruction, assessment and professional development to create a coherent whole, an effective resource allocation plan for CSR ties every possible resource into supporting the improvement plan. Resources to be considered include federal (such as CSRD and Title 1), state, local and private funds as well as staffing and time allocations.

Ultimately the resource allocation and CSR planning processes should become tied together. A study by the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL) of how state education agencies, schools, districts and model providers have initiated CSRD in six states found that such merging was essential to implementation. NCREL identified several important lessons (http://www.ncrel.org/csri/respub/launch.htm).

- Reforms and resources must be integrated for successful CSRD implementation. Such integration enables CSRD work to contribute to achieving other goals and vice versa.
- CSRD cannot be an isolated program competing with other programs. Likewise, CSRD needs to be the top priority, not one of many priorities.

- Work, dollars and time devoted to CSRD are also devoted to other initiatives because CSRD entails all of a school's and/or district's reform efforts.
- Through coordination CSRD increases reform efficiency and effectiveness.

Once initial plans for integrating reforms and resources have been developed, schools and districts may want to explore their options for spending their federal funds. Contrary to what many educators believe, there is considerable flexibility in allocating resources from several federal funding streams. A new report by the Center on Education Policy and the Policy Exchange at the Institute for Educational Leadership called *Understanding Flexibility in Federal Education Programs* (http://www.policyexchange.iel.org/pubs/Understanding_Flexibility_Federal_Education_Programs_2000.html) explains flexibility initiatives in CSRD, Title 1, IDEA, Goals 2000 and other federal programs. It also contains several examples, such as a school district that used Title 1 funds to operate family learning centers. Of course, flexibility at the federal level does not guarantee flexibility at the state and local levels. Schools should investigate their state and local policies before developing detailed plans to combine funds.

What Does CSR Actually Require?

It is very difficult for schools to plan for CSR and properly coordinate resources without knowing what resources are required to successfully implement CSR. While specific needs will vary from school to school, an Issue Paper (http://www.rand.org/publications/IP/IP175/index.html) by RAND sheds some light on this issue. RAND collected data on required resources and sources of funding for one school year at 58 schools implementing CSR models. The findings were as follows.

a) Average resource requirements imposed by CSR:

- Total: $162,000
- Broken down by category:
  - Teacher time — 40% — $66,000
  - Personnel — 36% — $59,000
  - Model Services — 16% — $25,000
  - Materials and Conferences — 8% — $12,000

b) Sources of funding for CSR:

- Reallocation of a school's normal district allocation — 38% — $62,000
- Title 1 (not considered part of the normal district allocation because not all schools receive Title 1 funds) — 33% — $53,000
- District budget — 18% — $30,000
- Grants (this study was conducted before the initiation of CSRD) —7% — $11,000
- Other — 4% — $6,000

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Resources

- In *How to Rethink School Budgets to Support School Transformation* Allan Odden explores the costs of seven New American Schools designs and how schools can pay for them by reallocating resources. The designs include ATLAS Communities, Audrey Cohen College, Co-NECT Schools, Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound, Modern Red Schoolhouse Institute, National Alliance for Restructuring Education (now called America's Choice) and Roots and Wings.
  http://www.naschools.org/respub/oddenbud.pdf

- *Rethinking the Allocation of Teaching Resources: Some Lessons from High-Performing Schools* by the Consortium for Policy Research in Education contains a method for measuring the extent to which schools use their resources to support teaching and learning. It also explains the following five principles of resource allocation: reducing specialized programs to create more individual time for all students in heterogeneous instructional groups, providing more flexible student grouping by school professionals, creating structures for more personal relationships between teachers and students, developing longer and more varied blocks of instructional time, and creating more useful common planning time for teachers.
  http://www.gse.upenn.edu/cpre/frames/pubs.html

- *Reallocation of Resources for Schoolwide Programs* is an online PowerPoint presentation by the Star Center that covers research indicating the importance, principles and steps of resource reallocation.
  http://www.starcenter.org/ppt/budget/index.htm

- The Star Center has also developed a game called *Show Me The Money* that teaches participants how to better coordinate funds and programs while meeting school needs. This elaborate game provides a simulated environment for using the Model for Coordinated Funding.
  http://www.starcenter.org/pdf/showmoney.pdf

- "Making Better Use of Resources for Educational Reform" by Allan Odden is available in the *ASCD Yearbook 1999: Preparing our Schools for the 21st Century*.
  http://www.ascd.org/readingroom/books/marsh99toc.html

- The *Resource Guide for Coordinated Funding and Programs* by the Texas Education Agency and Education Service Center Region II is an extensive manual that explains how various federal and state funds can be coordinated.
  http://www.esc2.net/programs/funding99/default.htm

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- Information on the appropriate uses of CSRD and Title 1 funds can be found in sections G-4 and G-7 of the CSRD Guidance. http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/compreform/csrdgui.html

Question from the Field: "How much do Accelerated Schools, Core Knowledge, Different Ways of Knowing, Direct Instruction and High Schools That Work charge?"

This question from the field provides an introduction to the fees and related services of CSR models. Actual costs for schools will depend on the array of services requested. The information provided was gathered from the Catalog of School Reform Models which is available in the Examining CSR Models section of NCCSR's Step by Step web site at http://www.goodschools.gwu.edu/SBS/ECSRM.html.

1) The Accelerated Schools Project (National Center and satellite centers) charges $13,000-$15,000 per year for a Basic Partnership Agreement (minimum three-year commitment) that includes, in the first year: training of a coach, principal, and school staff member (excluding travel expenses); training materials, including three copies of the Accelerated Schools Resource Guide; one site visit by a project staff member; technical assistance by phone, fax and e-mail; monthly networking opportunities; a year-end retreat; and

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subscriptions to newsletters and the project's electronic network. For more information see http://www.stanford.edu/group/ASP/.

2) Initial training for Core Knowledge costs around $6,000 in fees and travel. The average training session is five days although the session length is flexible depending on the requirements of the school. The first year material costs (Core Knowledge curriculum and additional books and materials) average a minimum of $200 per teacher. The cost of additional materials varies according to the resources already available to the school. The Core Knowledge membership fee is $10 per year. Teachers are encouraged to attend the annual conference and regional summer workshops. For more information see http://www.coreknowledge.org/.

3) With Different Ways of Knowing costs are based on the partnership-building plan created with a given district or cluster of schools. The average cost is $35,000 per school for each year of the three-year course of study. For school faculties above 20 there are additional costs for participation, depending on the size and level of involvement. Other expenses include released time for professional development (an average of three days in the summer and four days during the year) and costs to cover teachers' time for curriculum planning, support study groups, and on-site coaching sessions. Any desired independent evaluation, additional leadership training, pre-service partnerships with local universities and

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colleges, and/or summer school program support would add to program costs. For more information see http://www.dwoknet.galef.org/.

4) The cost of training services provided by Direct Instruction for a school is usually $65,000 per year for five years. Curricular materials, purchased separately from Science Research Associates, a division of McGraw-Hill, cost approximately $125 per student. Additionally, schools must cover release time for teachers and coaches throughout the school year. For more information visit the Association for Direct Instruction's web site at http://www.adihome.org/.

5) Three years of High Schools That Work implementation costs $25,000-$35,000 per year. These costs include services such as a site development conference, planning, technical assistance visits, staff and curriculum development, training and resource materials, team conference registration, and the assessment package with an evaluative study. (These are fees for sites in non-member states for site-specific services. Sites in member states have the option of contracting for site-specific services with providers approved by the states and SREB.) Other expenses include funds for stipends and substitute teachers, new kinds of curriculum materials, and travel expenses for state, regional or national training. For more information see http://www.sreb.org/programs/hstwindex.asp.

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VIII. EVALUATION

Evaluation is critical to CSR for three reasons. First, evaluation demonstrates the success of the CSR initiative. The primary goal of most schools that engage in CSR is to increase student achievement. A well-planned evaluation will result in data that show when (e.g., in what grades), where (e.g., in which classrooms or with which teachers) and with whom (e.g., in which groups or types of students) such increases have been achieved.

Second, evaluation can be the foundation for sustaining support for CSR among school and district staff, parents, students and others interested in school improvement. For example, schools often find that behavior and attitudes improve long before increases in students' academic achievement occur. If data are gathered and analyzed during implementation, staff members can be recognized and rewarded for their early successes. In addition to student achievement data, the CSRD program guidance suggests collecting data on attendance, grade promotion, graduation, suspension, expulsion, course taking, staff support, staff development, technical assistance and parental involvement. The Guidance on CSRD is available at http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/compreform/csrdgui.html.

Finally, just as evaluation may be used to identify initial successes, it can also be used early in the implementation process to identify difficulties that may arise. Continuous data collection and analysis

ensures that school staff members identify and respond to potential difficulties before they become problems.

Recognizing the benefits of evaluation, many CSR model developers have created evaluation instruments to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the model. Some of these instruments are simple lists of benchmarks, while others are elaborate software packages for collecting and analyzing an array of data. When schools are considering a model and striving to meet evaluation requirements, they should keep the following two questions in mind.

- Does the school staff have the time, knowledge and technology needed to collect and analyze data according to the model specifications?
- Is the model evaluation broad enough to meet all of the school's CSR evaluation needs?

Key Issue

The key to efficiently conducting a valuable evaluation is planning ahead. Many schools see evaluation as a means of accountability rather than a tool; they do not think through the details of their CSR evaluations until after they have been implementing their improvement plans for a year or two. This often means that data that could be used to refine implementation are not being gathered and that baseline data (which could have been used to show improvement) are lost. When evaluation is seen as a tool, however, evaluation and accountability requirements can be met while

data for decision-making and continuous improvement are being gathered and used. New American Schools has produced a guide for planning and conducting this type of evaluation called *How to Evaluate Comprehensive School Reform Models* (http://www.naschools.org/respub/howtoevaluating.pdf). The guide uses examples from Memphis City schools to demonstrate how evaluation data can be used regularly.

Best Practices

The CSRD office in the U.S. Department of Education has identified best practices in using evaluation data. One school the Department visited is conducting an on-going evaluation to ensure the CSR model it selected serves all students. On average, the school is showing improvements — but a break down of the data revealed that low performing students are not improving. The school is now building basic skills instruction into the model to meet the needs of the low performing students.

In another school the teachers are using a self-assessment tool they developed to examine what is and what is not going well with their instructional practices. They are using the findings to create professional development activities that meet their individual classroom needs. These and other best practices can be found in *CSRD in the Field: Final Update*, http://www.goodschools.gwu.edu/SBS/ICSR.html.

Evaluation

Resources

- Several evaluation tools are available on the "Evaluating Success" page of CSR Step by Step, a section of NCCSR's web site with all of the best tools available for determining the effectiveness of a CSR initiative.
  http://www.goodschools.gwu.edu/SBS/ES.html

- CSRDweb.net has a discussion group on evaluation and data collection that allows school staff and researchers to exchange strategies and resources for evaluating CSR.
  http://www.csrdweb.net/groups.htm

- The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory has created a workshop on CSRD evaluation for schools. The training package includes a sample agenda, scripts, overheads, handouts and other resources. For more information, contact Janice Wright at 1-800-547-6339, ext. 676 or wrightj@nwrel.org.

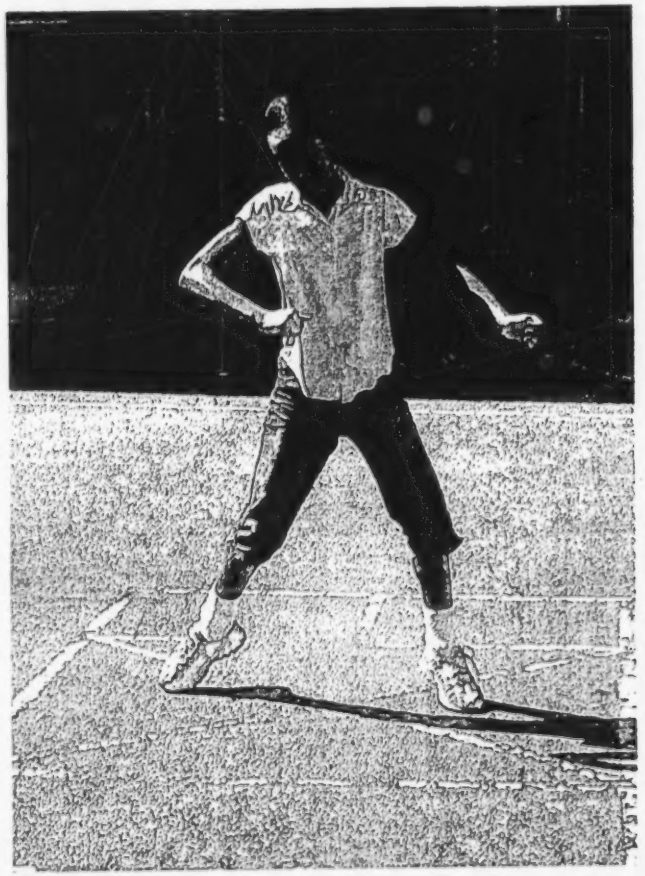
- *Comprehensive School Reform: A Guidebook on School-Wide Improvement*, developed by the Region XI Northern California Comprehensive Assistance Center, contains a data collection matrix to be filled out by school staff. This matrix simplifies designing an evaluation by breaking down types of data to be collected on student demographics and achievement, classroom processes and support, and school

management and resources.
Matrix:
http://www.wested.org/csrd/guidebook/pdf/tools09.pdf
Full report:
http://www.wested.org/csrd/guidebook/pdf.htm

- Pacific Resources for Education and Learning has developed and posted online a PowerPoint workshop on CSRD planning and evaluation, and a CSRD school self-study tool. The workshop covers everything from identifying a problem to using evaluation findings. The self-study tool has a series of questions based on the nine components and progress with implementation.
http://www.prel.org/programs/Csrdp/csrd.html

- *Discussing Reform: Tools for Facilitating a Focus Group* was developed by the LAB at Brown University and RMC Research Corporation to conduct discussions of school reform with a mix of practitioners and technical assistance providers. Six tools are provided along with suggestions for adapting the tools to meet specific research needs. Key issues such as implementation, support systems and standards are addressed.
http://www.lab.brown.edu/public/pubs/Disc_Reform.pdf

- The ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation (at http://ericae.net/) has a variety of resources for schools such as a test locator and an online full text assessment library. For starters, the following URL takes you to an ERIC Digest written by the Clearinghouse called *Some Evaluation Questions*. http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed423311.html



Evaluation

IX. COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

According to the CSRD program legislation and guidance, having a comprehensive approach means creating a coherent, high quality learning environment by aligning all of the following:

- School management
- Classroom management
- Curriculum
- Instruction
- Assessment
- Professional development
- Technology
- Parental involvement

Start with making sure that each component helps the school reach its ultimate goal — an educational program that enables all students to meet state content and performance standards. Next, consider relationships among the components.

Best Practices

One way to achieve a comprehensive approach to improvement is to create a diverse planning team that represents your school community. A representative planning team leads to an inclusive plan and provides people with opportunities to explore how they, or their organizations,

could work together to better integrate the educational program. In *Making Good Choices*, the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL) recommends including all of the following representatives:

- School and district administrators
- Teachers representing various grades, content areas and teams
- Other professional staff
- Parents
- Community representatives
- Business people
- Higher education representatives
- Students

The full report, which has many great suggestions for CSR planning and implementation, is available at http://www.goodschools.gwu.edu/SBS/PaA.html.

Once the comprehensive approach has been planned, a strategy for implementing and sustaining the schoolwide improvements must also be developed. Develop a comprehensive plan, but don't try to implement it all at once. Think big, and then take one step at a time. With an implementation plan that has a series of incremental changes, teachers and other staff will have time to learn, experiment with and reflect on new practices. As a research summary on professional development and comprehensive change produced by the Knowledge Loom explains, the greater the change that an organization is

undertaking, the less likely that the change will be successful. This does not mean that CSR cannot be achieved; it means that the reform plan should be broken into manageable pieces. However, these pieces need to be examined so that they are implemented in a logical sequence that preserves the internal coherence of the comprehensive approach. The Knowledge Loom, a product of the Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory at Brown University, can be found at http://knowledgeloom.org/index.shtml.

Model Selection

If your school is considering selecting an external model to assure the comprehensiveness of your reform, you can use resources such as those listed on NCCSR's web site under CSR Step by Step, Examining CSR Models, which can be found at http://www.goodschools.gwu.edu/SBS/ECSRM.html, as a starting place for gathering information.

Once you've narrowed your options to a handful of models, it's time to take an in-depth look at how your school — in partnership with a model — will achieve a comprehensive approach to improvement. The Education Commission of the States (http://www.ecs.org) developed the following questions on comprehensiveness for schools and model developers. Schools can use these questions as a guide for determining if the model's concept of comprehensiveness is a good fit with their own.

Comprehensive Approach

1) Does the program encompass the whole school and not just particular grade levels, subjects, students or teachers?
2) Does the model clearly and centrally focus on improved teaching and learning?
3) Is the model truly comprehensive in scope? Does it demonstrate a clear internal logic that ties everything (e.g., curriculum, standards, assessments, teaching and professional development) to improved student achievement?
4) How will the developer help each school incorporate the program to meet the school's own vision? Are the strategies to accomplish this well thought out?
5) What evidence shows that eligible districts and schools are willing and able to reallocate resources toward comprehensive school reform to guarantee long-term success?
6) How has the developer mapped out strategies to ensure all students meet or exceed state standards?
7) Does the developer demonstrate how it will respond to student needs as identified by the school and other assessments?
8) Does the developer explain in detail what its relationship will be to the school and how long its site-based assistance will be necessary? For example, is the same investment level necessary to continue the relationship after three years?
9) What evidence indicates the developer has the capacity (internal and external staff) to deliver what it promises?
10) Does the developer outline what key "readiness factors" it must see from a school before the model is implemented?

Has the school or district conducted a thoughtful and comprehensive study of whether it can effectively implement the model at this time?

Resources

- In the *CSR Self-Assessment Tool* developed by NWREL, the comprehensive approach component is broken into the following objectives:
  1) Improvement efforts encompass the whole school rather than focusing on particular grade levels, subjects, students or teachers.
  2) The school staff and administrators clearly and centrally focus on improved teaching and learning.
  3) There is alignment between curriculum, standards, assessments, teaching and professional development.
  4) Instruction is guided by state standards and benchmarks.
  5) The school staff (site council) conducted a thorough needs assessment within the last 18 months.

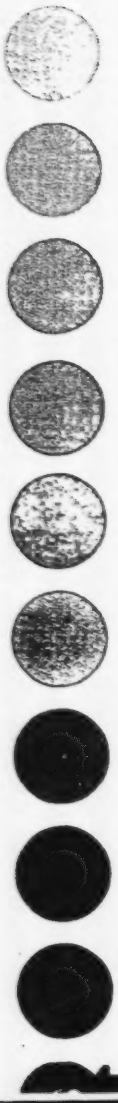
  http://www.goodschools.gwu.edu/SBS/PaA.html

- NCREL has also developed a *Self-Evaluation Tool* that helps school staff members break down what it means to have a comprehensive approach by asking the following questions:
  1) To what extent do teachers, administrators and staff have a shared vision for the school?

2) To what extent does school improvement encompass the whole school rather than focusing on particular grade levels, subjects, students or teachers?
3) To what extent is the quality of your school improvement efforts consistent across issues, goals and focus?
4) How well aligned are your school improvement efforts with your vision?

NCREL's Tool is available in Appendix A of *Making Good Choices*.
http://www.goodschools.gwu.edu/StepBS/PaA.html

- *Implementing Schoolwide Programs: An Idea Book on Planning* by the U.S. Department of Education outlines the following six steps for schools to take in developing a comprehensive school reform plan: establishing a planning team, conducting a comprehensive needs assessment, clarifying needs and finding research-based strategies, setting schoolwide program goals, writing the schoolwide plan and finalizing the schoolwide plan.
http://www.ed.gov/pubs/Idea_Planning/



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